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Throne-Makers. By WILLIAM ROSCOE THAYER. (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co. 1899. Pp. viii, 329.)

THIS volume by the accomplished author of *The Dawn of Italian Independence* contains a series of brilliant biographical studies. These are eight in number. The first four are grouped by themselves under the title of the book, "Throne-Makers," and comprise essays upon Bismarck, Napoleon III., Kossuth and Garibaldi. The last quartette consists of Carlyle, Tintoret, Bruno and Bryant; and, as these men were anything but throne-makers, the author introduces them under the sub-title "Portraits." In the first four essays the biographical motive predominates. The man is depicted in action. The other four subjects are rather made the texts for philosophical reflections upon art, literature and life.

These essays are singularly even in merit. The subjects chosen are universally interesting; the description is vivid, the analysis keen, the style terse and eloquent, the whole work dramatic in effect yet without a sacrifice of sanity and thoughtfulness. From cover to cover there is a succession of striking often luminous generalizations which make these essays good models of their kind, compact with thought, wide in range of comparison, and replete with intellectual stimulus for the reader.

It seems to me that the author strikes but one false note in the whole work, and that is a fortunately infrequent note of querulousness toward the days in which he lives. This discordant note jars a little in the author's somewhat forced reference to the recent events in the Philippines and in such barbed complaints as this: "In a time like our own, when literature on either side of the Atlantic lacks original energy; when the best minds are busy with criticism rather than with creation; when ephemeral story-tellers and spineless disciples of culture pass for masters, and sincere but uninspired scholars have our respect but move us not," etc.

Mr. Thayer advances no novel thesis about any of his subjects. He combats no historical judgment. Bismarck is, as usual, the mighty Titan, Thor reincarnated; Kossuth and Garibaldi are heroes of a noble patriotic emotion; Louis Napoleon is the adroit unscrupulous intriguer; Carlyle, the historian of human nature; Tintoret, the artist of rare originality and power; Bruno, the martyr of rationalism, and Bryant the lover of nature, who sometimes sang and always preached. Nevertheless these verdicts which have long been incorporated in the common opinion of our time are here set forth with such skill in narration and with such pungency of comment that there is not a dull page in the book.

He compares for instance the individualism of the Yankee society with the mechanical precision of the German civilization. "That Prussian system takes a turnip-fed peasant, and in a few months makes of him a military weapon, the length of whose stride is prescribed in centimeters—a machine which presents arms to a passing lieutenant with as much gravity and precision as if the fate of Prussia hinged on that special act. It takes the average tradesman's son, puts him into the educational mill,

and brings him out a professor,—equipped even to the spectacles,—a nonpareil of knowledge, who fastens on some subject great or small, timely or remote, with the dispassionate persistence of a leech ; and who, after many years, revolutionizes our theory of Greek roots, or microbes, or of religion.” Bryant, he says, “came at the end of that metrical drought which lasted from Milton’s death to Burns, when the instinct for writing musical iambics was lost, and instead men wrote in measured thuds, by rule.” In the essay on Carlyle, perhaps the strongest and most thoughtful in the book, the author pays his respects to a certain type of historians whose work he photographs thus : “the collection of manuscripts, the cataloguing of documents, the shoveling all together in thick volumes prefaced by forty pages of bibliography, each paragraph floating on a deep, viscous stream of notes, each volume bulging with a score of appendices—this is in no high sense history, but the accumulation of material therefor.”

Perhaps any title will do for a book of essays, yet it is difficult to see why this one, “Throne-Makers,” was chosen. The author himself restricts it to the first quartette of subjects only, but of these four Kossuth might almost rise from his grave to reject the name of “Throne-Maker.” Louis Napoleon tried to make a throne and failed, while Garibaldi may scarcely be allowed to take any laurels from Cavour. Neither would Garibaldi’s ambition to bear such a title be much greater than that of Kossuth. It would be a strange classification that would really rank the sublimated Junker with two Republicans and a Jesuitical adventurer.

CHARLES H. LEVERMORE.

Russia in Asia ; A Record and a Study, 1558–1899. By ALEXIS KRAUSSE. (New York : Henry Holt and Co. 1899. Pp. xii, 411.)

WE open this volume with some eagerness. An account of the progress of Russia in Asia, with maps and an appendix of official documents, is opportune at the present time. The author declares, too, in his preface that “in criticizing the rival policies of Russia and England my endeavor has been to present the clear and impartial deduction that a careful study of those policies yields,” which sounds promising. He also assures us that he has used more than two hundred authorities, Russian as well as English, although it is hard to understand how any one familiar with Russian can be so careless in his transcription as to write repeatedly *tchinovik* for *tchinovnik* and to employ for the same termination of proper names *-of*, *-off* and *-ov* indiscriminately. Our disappointment, however, begins at about the end of the first page ; by the time we get to the last, with its climax of abuse, our feeling is not far from disgust. “Greed of empire,” “Muscovite yoke,” “career of intrigue,” “the ever forward movement of Russian exploitation,” “the desire to invade other countries or despoil their rulers,” “the swashbuckling attitude of the Great White Tsar,” “the Muscovite octopus,” “the